

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group,

5 comprising

evaluation of the mutual proximity between brands, or between vehicles, or between a brand and a vehicle, through the magnitude of the angle θ formed by the vectors thereof, in a coordinate system in which a plurality of factors are
10 respectively taken to be axes with the origin taken to be the factor score = 0, and the factor score of each brand and/or each vehicle for each factor is expressed as a distance from the origin along the factor axis.

15 2. The method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand and/or a vehicle according to claim 1, comprising the evaluation of mutual proximity by means of the magnitude of the angle θ made by said vectors and their mutual distance.

20 3. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group, wherein

in a coordinate system in which a plurality of factors
25 are respectively taken to be axes with the origin taken to be the factor score = 0, and the factor score of each brand and/or vehicle for each factor is expressed as a distance

from the origin along the factor axis, the mutual proximity of a specific brand or vehicle l_i and a specific brand or vehicle m_j is evaluated by means of equation (1) below.

$$D_{ij} = [\alpha \{ \sum_{k=1}^n (l_{ik} - m_{jk})^2 \} + \beta (1 - \cos \theta_{ij})^2]^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

5 where:

i, j : Numbers assigned to brands or vehicles

D_{ij} : Value distance between brand or vehicle l_i ,

and brand or vehicle m_j

l_{ik} : Factor score on the k -factor axis of brand or

10 vehicle l_i

m_{jk} : Factor score on the k -factor axis of brand or

vehicle m_j

n : Number of factor axes used in evaluation

θ_{ij} : Angle made by the vectors of the brand or

15 vehicle l_i , and the brand or vehicle m_j

α, β : Weighting factors, where $0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$ and $0 < \beta \leq$

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4. The proximity evaluation method according to claim
20 3, wherein $2\alpha \leq \beta$.

5. The proximity evaluation method according to claim
3, wherein $\alpha = 0.05$ to 0.4 , and $\beta = 0.95$ to 0.6 .

25 6. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a vehicle to a brand, which determines the affinity of each of the vehicles in a selected vehicle group with a specific

brand by means of the value distance D_{ij} of claim 3 formed by each of the vehicles of said selected vehicle group and said specific brand.

5 7. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand to a vehicle, which determines the affinity of each of the brands in a selected brand group with a specific vehicle by means of the value distance D_{ij} of claim 3 formed by each of the brands of said selected brand group and said specific
10 vehicle.

 8. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand to a brand, which determines the proximity of each of the brands in a selected brand group with a specific brand by
15 means of the value distance D_{ij} of claim 3 formed by each of the brands of said selected brand group and said specific brand.

 9. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a
20 vehicle to a vehicle, which determines the proximity of each of the vehicles in a selected vehicle group with a specific vehicle by means of the value distance D_{ij} of claim 3 formed by each of the vehicles of said selected vehicle group and said specific vehicle.

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 10. A method of evaluation of the proximity of a brand and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of

factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group,
comprising

evaluation of the mutual proximity between brands or
between vehicles through the magnitude of the angle formed by

5 factor scores and a factor axis, in a coordinate system in
which a plurality of factors are respectively taken to be
axes with the origin taken to be the factor score = 0, and
the factor score of each brand and/or each vehicle for each
factor is expressed as a distance from the origin along the
10 factor axis.

11. The method of evaluation of the proximity of a
brand and/or a vehicle according to claim 10, comprising the
evaluation of proximity by means of the magnitude of the
15 angle made by factor scores and a factor axis, and the
distance between factor scores and the origin.

12. A system for evaluation of the proximity of a brand
and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of
20 factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group,
comprising

means for determining factor scores of each brand
and/or vehicle for each factor of the plural factors, and,

in a coordinate system in which the plural factors are
25 taken to be axes with the origin taken to be the factor score
= 0, and the factor score of each brand and/or vehicle for
each factor is expressed as a distance from the origin along

the factor axis, means for generation of the angles of vectors formed between coordinate points determined by the factor scores of each brand and/or each vehicle.

5 13. A system for evaluation of the proximity of a brand and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group, and having

 means for determining factor scores of each brand and/or
10 vehicle for each factor of a plurality of factors, and,

 in a coordinate system in which the plural factors are taken to be axes with the origin taken to be the factor score = 0, and the factor score of each brand and/or vehicle for each factor is expressed as a distance from the origin along
15 the factor axis, means for generation of the angles formed between coordinate points determined by the factor scores of each brand and/or each vehicle, and factor axes.

 14. The system for proximity evaluation according to
20 claim 12, having means for generation of distances between coordinate points and/or distances between coordinate points and the origin.

 15. A system for evaluation of the proximity of a brand
25 and/or a vehicle, based on factors obtained as a result of factor analysis of a brand group and/or a vehicle group, and having

means for determining factor scores of each brand and/or vehicle for each factor of a plurality of factors, and,

in a coordinate system in which the plural factors are taken to be axes with the origin taken to be the factor score

5 = 0, and the factor score of each brand and/or vehicle for each factor is expressed as a distance from the origin along the factor axis, means for generation of the mutual proximity between a specific brand or vehicle l_i and a specific brand or vehicles m_j , using equation (1) below.

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$$D_{ij} = [\alpha \{ \sum_{k=1}^n (l_{ik} - m_{jk})^2 \} + \beta (1 - \cos \theta_{ij})^2]^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

where:

i, j : Numbers assigned to brands or vehicles

D_{ij} : Value distance between brand or vehicle l_i , and brand or vehicle m_j

15 l_{ik} : Factor score on the k-factor axis of brand or vehicle l_i

m_{jk} : Factor score on the k-factor axis of brand or vehicle m_j

n : Number of factor axes used in evaluation

20 θ_{ij} : Angle made by the vectors of the brand or vehicle l_i , and the brand or vehicle m_j

α, β : Weighting factors, where $0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$ and $0 < \beta \leq$

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25 16. A computer program product for executing the method according to claim 1 or claim 3.